



**Green Bay Area
Public School District**

Engagement. Equity. Excellence.

Good afternoon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Julie Seefeldt and I am the Director of the English Learner Programs for the Green Bay Area Public Schools. Our District educates 4,600 English Learners, which is about 22% of our district's total enrollment. To look at the number of English learners we are educating in the Green Bay Area Public Schools in a different perspective, 91% of the public school districts in the state of Wisconsin do not even have a total student population of 4,600 students. In the last state budget, the Department of Public Instruction requested an additional \$4.3 million dollars for bilingual/bicultural program reimbursement. Sadly, the requested funding for bilingual/bicultural was not included in the budget.

The past 28 years has seen the bilingual/bicultural program reimbursement rate decline. In 1990, the reimbursement rate was 63%, in 2000 it dropped to 20.6%, and in 2010 it fell to 9.7%. The current reimbursement rate for bilingual/bicultural programs is at approximately 7.9%. The \$4.3 million dollars requested for bilingual/bicultural programs would have only brought the reimbursement rate up to 12%. The 12% reimbursable rate request is still 51% lower from where it was in 1990, and 12.6% lower from where it was in 2000. Funding for English Learners is consistently decreasing, while the number of English Learners in our District and across the state of Wisconsin is consistently increasing.

The critical bilingual/bicultural funding is for a student population whose unique language education needs must be met. Vast resources are needed to ensure the Green Bay Area Public School District's 4,600 English Learners obtain rigorous standards in order to graduate college, career, and community ready. Now imagine an intellectually delayed English Learner who never had the opportunity to step foot in a school until he came to Green Bay at the age of 15. Think of the resources needed to educate this student, plus the several hundred other English Learners who have been in the country less than two years. Or, consider the resources needed for our refugee students who come to us from war-torn countries, who may have witnessed family members being executed. These are just a few real examples of students in our District who desperately require more servicing and resources in a time of dwindling state budget dollars for English Learners.

As you develop your recommendations for school funding, I implore you to consider the needs of the English Learners. In this time of federal accountability as part of the state's approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, the stakes for English Learners have never been higher. Now is the time to fund educational dollars in the state budget for English Learners. Thank you for your time today.

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